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PASADENA STAR-NEWS

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JPL shirks responsibilities

JPL/Caltech was quick to put its own spin on a groundwater contamination report to whitewash itself on your front page ("Report: Tainted water no threat" Aug. 14). After decades of poisoning our wells, the institution continues to shirk its clean-up responsibilities.

Sure, they cut a deal with Pasadena nearly 10 years ago and installed a treatment plant for the city. But why, at the 11th hour, did they carve Northwest Altadena out of the arrangement? Was it because JPL/Caltech knew that while Pasadena had the political and

financial clout to leverage a deal, the Lincoln Avenue Mutual Water Company, serving primarily a poor African-American community, lacked those resources?

For the better part of the '90s, Lincoln's rate payers have been subsidizing the JPL/Caltech cleanup. It's the people in this socio-economically depressed area who installed a treatment plant to clean local tap water served to some 4,000 homes next to JPL. And throughout the '90s, JPL/Caltech has continued to stonewall Lincoln customers' pleas to help pay for the cleanup. Perhaps they think that eventually Lincoln will go away. We will not!

Congressman James Rogan, Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, you have to question the motives of an agency that lives off of federal funds — has a king's ransom to advance civilization throughout the universe, yet has such disdain for the people in its own neighboring communities.

ROBERT J. GOMPERTZ
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